

POLITICAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY

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Duke begged his master for the rest. In 1806 this and other material, which had been returned to the Royal Library in 1749, appeared in six volumes with the title *Oeuvres de Louis XIV*. The importance of this incorrect and incomplete edition was not properly recognized, and as a publisher's venture they were a failure. Though Chateaubriand declared that the *Memoirs* would increase the author's renown, and that Louis XIV did not cease to be Louis le Grand, little attention was paid to them till 1852, when Sainte-Beuve wrote two appreciative *Cauteries du Lundi*. A few years later, in 1860, Charles Dreyss produced a critical edition of the *Memoires de Louis XIV pour l'instruction du Dauphin* in two substantial volumes, with an elaborate Introduction and copious notes, which at once took its place among the indispensable authorities on the longest and most illustrious reign in the history of France. The most important parts were published two generations after Dreyss by Jean Longnon, whose work appeared in English in 1924 as *A King's Lessons in Statecraft*.

The *Memoirs* are only a fragment, for they begin with the young King's assumption of control after the death of Mazarin and end with the Treaty of Ak la Chapelle in 1668. Though the royal author frequently addresses his infant son, this was little more than a pose, for the object was to glorify himself. By far the fullest portion of the narrative is the account of the years 1666-1668, which was written first and was followed by a brief sketch of the years 1660-1665, of which only the account of 1661 and a fragment of 1662 survive. The *Memoirs* were carefully compiled, and were intended to be a handbook for rulers as well as a historical record. They were worked up from brief diary notes in the King's hand,

several of which have survived, into a journal partially dictated by him, and finally into the still fuller version enriched by reflections on policy and morals. Even then the test was revised three times, and there are corrections on the first draft in the royal hand, Colbert supplied some material, but the chief editor was Perigny> the King's reader and the tutor of the Dauphin, who died in 1670. The sketch of the years 1660-5 was mainly composed by Pellisson in 1670-1. Thus the whole work was written very close to the events it described.

The main interest of this calm and dignified narrative is the revelation of the King's character and ideology. He is fully justified in depicting himself as the real ruler of the Kingdom, and as a jealous guardian of the prestige of the crown, for he